

KNIGHT

An Eulogium on Nathan Smith M.D.

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AN

**EULOGIUM**

ON

**NATHAN SMITH, M. D.**

LATE PROFESSOR OF

**THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PHYSIC AND SURGERY;**

IN THE

**MEDICAL INSTITUTION OF YALE COLLEGE;**

**PRONOUNCED AT HIS FUNERAL,**

**BY J. KNIGHT, M. D.**  
*m*

**PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.**

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**NEW HAVEN:**

**PRINTED BY HEZEKIAH HOWE.**

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**1829.**

*New Haven, Feb. 2, 1829.*

PROF. KNIGHT—RESPECTED SIR,

WE take pleasure in communicating to you, the annexed resolution of the Medical Class, requesting for publication, a copy of your eulogy on their late instructor and your associate, Professor Smith. The high degree of gratification which that performance afforded them, and their desire to preserve some memorial of the life of one whose loss they so deeply deplore, and whose memory they so much revere, unite in prompting to this request. The committee beg leave to unite with the class, in a tender of their high respect and esteem.

J. C. GOODHUE.

H. D. BULKLEY.

*At a meeting of the Medical Class at their Lecture Room, Jan. 31, 1829.*

*Resolved*, That Messrs. J. C. Goodhue and H. D. Bulkley, be a committee to wait on Dr. Knight and request a copy of his eulogy on our late instructor, Prof. Smith, for publication.

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*New Haven, Feb. 7, 1829.*

GENTLEMEN,

Your polite note of the 2d inst. inclosing a vote of the Medical Class, requesting a copy of the eulogy on your late instructor, Prof. Smith, has been received and considered. Esteem for my late associate and friend while living, and respect for his memory when removed from us by death, prompted to the preparation of the discourse, at a short notice, and amidst the interruptions of professional employments. The same respect, as well as a desire to comply with the wishes of the Medical Class, leads me to consent to its publication, with little opportunity to correct its errors, or to supply its defects.

Permit me to express the hope that the example of one so much respected and beloved as your late instructor, may lead all who enter upon the profession of Medicine, to pursue the same course, of laborious, benevolent exertion.

Be pleased to present to the class which you represent, my acknowledgments for the compliment implied in their request, and accept for yourselves assurances of the esteem of your instructor and friend.

J. KNIGHT.

*Messrs. J. C. Goodhue and H. D. Bulkley.*

## EULOGIUM, &c.



### *Friends and Fellow Citizens,*

THE occasion which has brought us together is one of solemn and mournful interest. We are assembled to pay the last tribute of respect to the remains of one, in no ordinary degree, useful and beloved. Why one so beloved, so respected, and so useful, should be removed, when, to all human view, in the midst of his usefulness, is one of those mysterious dispensations of a wise providence, which short-sighted man can neither fathom nor explain. It becomes us to be thankful to the Giver of all good, that he raises up wise and good men among us; that he suffers them to remain, until by their example they excite, and by their instructions, they prepare others to walk in their steps: and when He sees fit to remove them, to say with humble submission, Thy will, O God, be done.

When a man, who has been widely known and beloved; who has exerted an extensive and beneficial influence over the interests of an important profession; who by the exertion of skill, assiduity and benevolence, has acquired the affections of a large and enlightened community, is removed by death, public opinion requires, and inclination dic-

tates, that some testimonial of his worth should be brought forward, by those who, having been associated with him, are supposed to know him best. This duty, with respect to our deceased friend, has been assigned to me. For the imperfections of its performance, the circumstances in which it is undertaken, will be a sufficient apology.

The subject of these remarks was the son of respectable parents, in moderate pecuniary circumstances, who at the time of his birth resided in Rehoboth, Mass. He was born on the 30th Sept. 1762. While he was yet young, the family removed to Chester, Windsor Co. Vermont, where his parents remained until their death. Of his early life little has reached us, except that his time was spent, in acquiring the elements of education at the ordinary country schools, and in agricultural pursuits on his father's farm.

Before he arrived at the period of manhood, in some of the latter years of the revolutionary war, he joined a body of the Vermont militia, which was stationed on the frontiers of that state, to repel the incursions of the Indian tribes of the neighborhood, and to keep them in check. How long he continued in this service is not known. He frequently alluded to the hardships and privations which he endured, while encamped in what was then a wilderness, with few of the necessaries, and none of the conveniences of life. While on this expedition he was shot at, and narrowly missed, by an Indian lying in ambush. These privations and dangers.

were not however peculiar to him, but were endured in common with many thousands of others of the hardy and enterprising inhabitants of our frontier settlements, during that perilous period, when property and life were exposed to all the dangers of savage warfare. While residing at his father's, a portion of his time was occupied with what was then almost a necessary employment; securing the game, and destroying the beasts of prey of the neighboring forests. In these pursuits, small parties of young men were often absent from home for many days. On one of these excursions, he was left by his companions, in mid winter, at a distance from home, with a slender stock of provisions. While waiting for their return, his supplies were exhausted, and what was more unfortunate, a sudden thaw came on, which softening the surface of the snow, then many feet in depth, rendered travelling impracticable. Here he was detained several days, subsisting entirely on the unsalted flesh of some game which he had taken. By the time the impediments to travelling were removed, he found himself afflicted, in consequence of exposure and improper food, with a severe and distressing disease. With difficulty he reached the nearest house, where, and at his father's, he was, for many months, confined by sickness. Thus his life passed on, in a course of laborious industry, and of hardy enterprize, until he arrived at the age of twenty-four years. What his mental acquirements at this period were, we have no means of judging. And,



although from the limited means of instruction which he enjoyed, we cannot rate them high, yet, from the fact that he was engaged during some of the winter months, as teacher of a school in the vicinity, we are warranted in the belief, that they were more than were ordinarily obtained by the young men of the period, in that country.

At this time an event occurred, which gave a new direction to his thoughts and his life. This event, trivial in its nature, and apparently casual, led him to the study, and finally to the practice, of a profession, which for more than forty years, he adorned and improved. The events to be stated, add one more to the many well known cases, which shew, by how small and apparently inoperative means, a wise overruling Providence, controls and directs the affairs both of individuals and of nations. Mr. Smith was present, almost without design on his part, at a surgical operation performed by Dr. Josiah Goodhue, then, and for years afterwards, the most celebrated surgeon in that region. By witnessing this operation, his attention was directed to the structure of the human body, and his curiosity excited to learn more of a subject at once so novel and interesting. Shortly after, he mentioned to Dr. Goodhue his desire to engage in the study of medicine, and requested permission to enter his office as a student. The Doctor judiciously inquired of him, for they were almost strangers to each other, what had been his previous course of life, and what were his acquirements. The reply was, un-



til last night, I have labored with my hands during my life. Dr. Goodhue told him kindly, that he was not in the habit of receiving young men as students, who had not received some preparatory education: giving him as the reason for this, that the profession of medicine was in a low state in that part of the country, and that to elevate it in reality and in public estimation, young men properly qualified only, should be encouraged to engage in it. In conclusion, he stated to Mr. Smith, that if he would place himself under the tuition of some person capable of instructing him, and acquire so much literary information, as would enable him to enter the freshman class of Harvard College, he would then receive him as a student. This judicious advice was happily followed. He selected the Rev. Mr. Whiting of Rockingham, Vt. as his instructor. With him he remained until the required condition was fulfilled. For three years after this he was a pupil of Dr. Goodhue, then residing in Putney, Vt. The assiduity and success with which he pursued his professional studies, are fully attested by his instructor, who always regarded him, with that esteem and affection, which can be excited in the mind of an instructor, only by diligence and good conduct on the part of the pupil. These kind feelings were fully reciprocated by Dr. Smith. He always spoke of this, his early friend, in the warmest terms of esteem and gratitude, as well for his early advice, as for his subsequent instruction, and for his countenance and

support after he engaged in the practice of his profession. That respectable gentleman still lives, and will mourn at the tidings of the death of a favorite pupil and devoted friend.

Dr. Smith commenced the active duties of his profession at Cornish in N. H. After practising, with what reputation or success we are not fully informed, for two or three years, he visited Harvard University, for the purpose of availing himself of the advantages which that celebrated institution afforded. Here, he attended the several courses of Lectures on Medicine and Surgery, as well as those on Natural Philosophy, and other means of instruction, to which persons, not members of the academical department, could gain admission. At the close of the term at Cambridge, he read an inaugural dissertation on 'The circulation of the blood,' which was received with high approbation, and, at the request of the faculty, was published. Having received the degree of Batchelor of Medicine from this University, he returned to Cornish, and engaged anew, with increased information and enlarged means of usefulness, in the practice of his profession.

At this period the medical profession, in that vicinity, was at a low ebb. The country itself, was to a great extent a wilderness, throughout which, were interspersed flourishing towns and villages. This state of the country was a type of the medical profession. The large majority of the physicians were uneducated and unskilful. This was true with respect to all of New Hampshire, except

Portsmouth and its vicinity, as well as the neighboring state of Vermont. There were Physicians and Surgeons, respectable for their talents and attainments, scattered over this region; but they were few when compared with the whole number. This state of his favorite profession was painful to the benevolent and enterprising mind of Dr. Smith. Instead of merely taking advantage of it, to elevate himself by the ignorance of others, he early engaged, with his usual vigor, to correct it. The most obvious and effectual means to remedy this evil, was to furnish those who were about to enter upon the profession, with an opportunity of obtaining a correct professional education. To accomplish this object, he projected the plan of a Medical Institution in connexion with Dartmouth College, located at Hanover in New Hampshire. The plan was soon completed, and Dr. Smith was appointed professor of medicine. For several years the business of instruction in the various branches of Medicine and Surgery, as well as the auxiliary sciences, was performed by him alone. To qualify himself more thoroughly for this employment, which he probably foresaw was to occupy a large portion of his future life, he determined to derive larger stores of knowledge from what had been long considered as the fountain of medical science; the school of Edinburgh. He accordingly left a practice which had then become lucrative, and again became a pupil, seeking instruction from those who were well qualified to give it. He spent about a year

in Great Britain, partly, in attending a full course of the Medical Lectures in Edinburgh, where the elder Monro and Dr. Black were then active teachers; and partly, in witnessing the practice of the hospitals in London. That this visit was full of interest and improvement to him cannot be doubted. He was perhaps in the best state to be improved by it. He was of mature years, had studied and practised enough to know, not only in general what every physician should learn, but, what in particular was necessary for him; and he was ardent and zealous in the cause of his profession. His course, after his return to his native country, was one of almost unrivalled success. The medical school, which he was the means of establishing, flourished in a high degree, under his auspices, and those of the able professors who were, in the course of a few years, associated with him. The number of pupils, which for several years after the establishment of the school, was about twenty, gradually increased, so that for many of the last years of his connexion with it, the average number was not far from sixty. These, upon the completion of their education, were scattered over the neighboring parts of New Hampshire and Vermont, and other more distant places in New England. They gradually occupied the stations, rendered vacant by the death of the older members of the profession, and by the loss of business of those who were incompetent. Thus, that portion of the country became filled with a race of young, enterprising, intelligent physicians,



who all justly looked up to Dr. Smith as their friend and professional father. This, together with his deservedly high and continually increasing reputation, as a kind, attentive, and skilful Physician and Surgeon, necessarily drew upon him a vast amount of business. Every Physician, especially all who had been his pupils, desired him as their counsellor : the sick and the friends of the sick, looked to him as their last resort in all cases of difficulty.

The labor which he endured in traversing, for the most part on horseback, such an extensive country, then, in part, almost a wilderness, over mountainous regions, and roads which were often nearly impassable, at every season, and in every vicissitude of weather ; the good which he accomplished, in affording advice and instruction, and by imparting a portion of his own vigor and energy to the younger members of the profession, as well as the more direct benefit which he afforded to the sick and distressed, can scarcely be estimated.

Thus he continued his laborious and successful exertions in the business of instruction at Hanover, and in the practice of his profession, in that vicinity, until the autumn of 1813. At this time, he accepted the invitation, which had been previously given him, to occupy the chair of a Professor, in the Medical Institution of Yale College, then just established in this city. From that time to the present, he has delivered an annual course of lectures, on the Theory and Practice of Physic and Surgery, to the class of Medical Students in this

Institution. Since that period, he has also delivered a course of lectures on the same branches, at Dartmouth College; one at the Vermont University in Burlington; and two at the recently established and flourishing Medical Institution of Brunswick College in Maine. To trace the career of Dr. Smith, as an instructor, and as a practitioner of Physic and Surgery, since his removal to this city, would be only to repeat the account which has been given of him, while residing in Hanover. To this place have resorted for many years past, from seventy to ninety young men; and it is no injustice to Dr. Smith's associates to say; that a principal object has been, to learn from his wisdom and experience, the practical parts of their profession. Here, the sick and unfortunate, from every part of the country, have collected, to receive the benefit of his skill. In addition to his practice in the immediate vicinity, he has been called to visit, professionally, every county, and almost every town in this state, as well as many more distant places in the neighboring states. Thus his life has been one continued scene of active, laborious and useful exertion.

Such as he has been for many years past, so useful, so honored and so beloved, we fondly hoped he might continue to be, for many succeeding years. But alas! our hopes are blasted. The last dread summons has reached him; his spirit has ascended to him who gave it, and his body must return to the dust from which it sprung. By this melan-



choly event, a bereaved family is called to mourn the loss of a kind and affectionate husband, a tender, indulgent and well beloved parent; the institution with which he was connected, a chief pillar and support; the medical profession, a father and a friend; the poor, the sick and the distressed, a means of consolation and relief, and the community at large, a distinguished benefactor.

The story of his sickness and death will be brief. About the middle of July last, he was seized with a severe illness, which after a short continuance, left him, but in a very debilitated state. From this state his friends perceived with alarm that he did not entirely recover. He continued to be weak, with occasional attacks of illness, through the remainder of the summer and autumnal months. Though enfeebled in body, his mind retained its usual vigor and activity, and unwilling to yield to what he probably considered a trivial complaint, he continued, with the exception of a few days, his laborious employments. No considerable alteration in the state of his health appeared, until about four weeks since, when he was attacked with a severe influenza. This was accompanied and followed, by a painful and vertiginous affection of the head. By the use of remedies these symptoms were alleviated. On the evening of Tuesday, the 13th inst. he first perceived a slight numbness of the left hand, with a trifling indistinctness in his articulation. These symptoms of paralysis gradually increased, until the morning of the 26th inst. when the powers

of life became exhausted, and at 6 o'clock, in the 67th year of his age, he slept the sleep of death.

That our deceased friend was no ordinary man, the brief story of his life already told, most conclusively proves. In early life he was a poor boy, in a comparatively obscure village, with a limited education, and still more limited means of advancing it. Thus he remained, until past the period when most men are fixed in their situation for life. At this time his mind received a new impulse. He resolved to render himself useful and distinguished. Having chosen his profession, he entered at once, with the decision which marked his character through life, upon the work of preparing himself for it. The means of acquiring an education were furnished almost entirely by his own exertions. He appears for many years, to have labored to acquire property, only to expend it in advancing his knowledge of literature and medicine. Following this purpose with untiring zeal, he obtained a medical education, such as was then almost unknown in New England. With the same zeal, activity and intelligence, he entered upon the practice of his profession, and subsequently upon the business of instruction. By pursuing this course, his reputation gradually increased, until he became more extensively known, than any other medical man in New England. Indeed it is doubted whether any other man in New England, of any profession, possessed so large a number of personal acquaintances and friends.

His acquaintance was not only extensive, but reached to every rank in society. The poor knew him as their benefactor; the sick, as their skilful, attentive physician; the rich, were honored by his society; and the wise and the good, received him as their friend and companion.

At the same time his influence over medical literature was equally extensive. This influence was exerted, through his large acquaintance among medical men, by his advice and example, as well as more directly through the medium of the various medical schools, which were favored with his instructions. By means of his influence thus exerted, he effected, over a large extent of country, a great and salutary change in the medical profession. The assertion, that he has done more for the improvement of Physic and Surgery in New England, than any other man, will, by no one, be deemed invidious. If the accomplishment of objects so important, with means so limited; the raising and sustaining so high and extensive a reputation, from so humble an origin; the advancing in such a degree, one of the liberal professions, over so large a country, be not marks of strong native talent, fostered by industry, I know not where indications of such talent can be found.

To form a correct opinion of the character of Dr. Smith, it will be proper to view him in the various relations which he sustained.

As a physician and surgeon, he early attained a high rank; a rank which he held through life. The

present is neither the place, nor the occasion to inquire into his opinions upon medical and surgical subjects, nor upon his mode of practice. (See Note.) It may however be proper, as illustrative of his character, to investigate those qualities of his mind and habits of life, which raised him to this elevated station.

The first faculty of his mind which I mention, was a keen, discriminating inquisitiveness into every thing submitted to his inspection. Nothing passed before him unseen or unheeded. This quality, which in a weak mind is mere inquisitiveness, exercised to gratify an idle curiosity, is, in a strong mind, a principle of rational enquiry, seeking in every direction, for information to be applied to some valuable purpose. By the continual exercise of this quality, ripened into a habit of steady, fixed observation, he collected in his mind, not only the outlines of the diseases with which man is afflicted, but all the minute circumstances, relative to their causes, rise, progress and termination; and the effect of remedies upon them in their various stages.

Another faculty of his mind was a memory highly retentive. This is so nearly allied to the habit of observation just mentioned, and so certain is it that whatever we observe minutely, is long remembered, that we are not surprised to find them so often associated in the same person. With him every fact which he observed, every truth which he heard stated, appeared to be impressed indelibly upon his mind. In the last years of his life, he

would relate with wonderful accuracy, not only the great, but also the minute events which he had witnessed. Especially, he remembered the diseases which he had seen, in all their varieties; the surgical operations which he had performed, and the causes requiring their performance, with all the attendant circumstances of person, time and place. By the aid of this faculty, his mind became a store-house, well filled with facts suited to his necessities. From it he could, at will, draw forth materials to guide him in his practice; to confirm and to illustrate his opinions.

Another faculty, which contributed more than either of the foregoing to his eminence, was the power of reducing all the knowledge, which he acquired, whether from reading or observation, to some useful practical purpose. This is opposed to mere speculation. It does not enquire into matters which have no practical bearing upon the happiness of man; but it observes all things as they now exist, in the present age, and in this country. It looks upon the evils now to be remedied, and the blessings now to be enjoyed. It leads the physician, to view diseases and accidents, as they present themselves to his own eyes; and to summon together all the information and every fact which he possesses, to bear upon the case immediately before him. This faculty is familiarly called plain common sense. It was possessed in a high degree by Dr. Smith, in relation to all subjects connected with his profession. The



same faculty was illustriously displayed, in the lives of Washington, Franklin, Sherman, Dwight and Whitney.

Another faculty possessed by the deceased, and which aided him much in his successful career, was an undaunted moral courage. The physician often feels it to be his duty to apply a powerful remedy, and the surgeon to perform a painful and hazardous operation, in cases where he can give no positive assurances of their success. The timid man shrinks from such high responsibility, and suffers his patient to be destroyed by disease. Such was not Dr. Smith. Having satisfied himself what course was best for his patient, he honestly advised, and fearlessly pursued it; regardless of the censure which might follow, should it prove unsuccessful. With him there was no hesitation, no wavering between duty and expediency; between the welfare of his patient and his own reputation. This conduct, in one who valued reputation so highly, is the strongest proof of the existence of that courage of the mind, so much more noble, and so much more rarely found, than mere physical valor.

To these intellectual qualities, were added others of a moral nature, which facilitated his progress, and rendered it more successful. I allude to the kindness, assiduity, and delicacy with which he treated his patients. In him kindness was a natural feeling, springing out directly from the benevolence of his disposition. This feeling, he doubtless cultivated from a knowledge of the effects



which its expression produces, in alleviating the distress, as well of the body as the mind. In all his intercourse with the sick, the kindness of his heart beamed upon his countenance, and flowed forth from his lips. Their faces brightened, and their spirits were roused at his approach, not more by the relief which they expected, than by the kindness with which it was afforded.

The assiduity of his attention to patients dangerously sick, was unremitted. He watched at their bedside by day and by night, administering to all their wants, and performing the offices of a kind friend, as well as of a skilful physician.

The esteem and respect which he entertained for the virtuous female character, and the purity and delicacy of his conduct towards those who possessed it, rendered him highly acceptable to all such as their physician. The continual exercise of these feelings, gained for him at once their confidence and esteem.

As an instructor, the reputation of Dr. Smith was high, from the time he began the business of instruction. Of the method which he adopted in relation to this subject, in the earlier part of his life, I have little information. The facts however, that for many years, he gave instruction upon all the branches of Medical and Surgical Science; that this instruction was acceptable to classes of intelligent young men; and that many who were thus instructed, have become eminent in their profession, prove not only versatility of talent, but va-

riety and extent of information, with a happy method of communicating it. His mode of communicating instruction, since his connexion with the institution in this place, has been simple, natural and unaffected. He sought no aid from an artificial style, but merely poured forth, in the plain language of enlightened conversation, the treasures of his wisdom and experience. He occupied but little time with the theories and opinions of other men, referring to books, only for the facts which they contain; nor did he often indulge in theoretic speculations of his own; but gave principally the results of his practice and experience. His object was to instil into the minds of his pupils the leading principles of their profession; not entering fully into the details of the practice, but leaving it for them to apply these principles to individual cases as they should present themselves. These principles he would illustrate, by appropriate cases, furnished by a long course of practice; related always in an impressive, and often in a playful manner, so as at once to gain the attention, and impress the truth illustrated, upon the mind. He often urged upon them the necessity of correct moral deportment, of industrious habits, and especially of forming a judgment for themselves, concerning the cases which were presented to them.

He endeavored to inspire them, both by precept and example, with a love of their profession, with activity in the practice of it, and a zeal for the promotion of its best interests.

At the same time that he communicated to his pupils instruction, he gained their affection by the suavity of his manners, and by a course of conduct towards them, by which they were satisfied that he ardently desired their best interests. Of all who have been instructed by him, the number is small of those who were not his personal friends.

The various relations of life were sustained by Dr. Smith in an exemplary manner. As a citizen, the same spirit which prompted him to enlist in the service of his country, when engaged in war, led him to support, by his influence, her free institutions in time of peace: as a lover of good order, he rejoiced in the enactment and the execution of wholesome laws and regulations; and as a friend of morality, he discountenanced vice in every form. The purity of his life, it is believed, arose not so much from the restraints of society, as from a purity of mind, which remained unsullied. So far as personal observation enables me to speak, he regarded the institutions and the ministers of religion, with the highest reverence. With regard to subjects of this nature, it is believed, that his last days were his best days.

In his relations to his fellow men, there are particular traits of his character, which ought not to pass unnoticed. He possessed strong social feelings and habits. Accustomed from early life to the society of men in every station, he entered readily into free and unreserved intercourse with all. In companies of every kind, learned or un-

learned, polished or otherwise, his free conversation, his fund of anecdote, and the acuteness of his remarks upon all subjects, whether relating to the common affairs of life, or the more important concerns of morals and literature, rendered him a welcome guest. His manners, which were free, yet unpresuming, and unshackled by the forms of ceremonial observances, were such as to impose no inconvenient restraints upon others or upon himself. No one delighted more in social intercourse with his friends, and in a free interchange of feelings and opinions with them. This was one of the pleasures of his life, and this endeared him to those with whom he associated.

Dr. Smith was eminently a benevolent man. He regarded man as his brother, and when in distress, as a brother he afforded him relief. No one, it is presumed, ever heard him say to the destitute, Be ye warmed and be ye clothed, without at the same time furnishing the means of relieving their necessities. That his charity was always discriminating is not probably true. It was the charity of the heart, and not of calculation; and often his most valuable benefactions were rendered in the course of professional exertion.

The mere distribution of a portion of his property to those who were in need, was indeed, the least part of his beneficence. It is no difficult matter for those who receive, as a compensation for their labor, an abundant supply of all they need, unless their hearts are fast bound by the chains of avarice,

to distribute a small portion of their substance to those who are in want. Indeed the selfish man often does this to rid himself of troublesome importunity. These merely, of their abundance, cast into the treasury. It is a far nobler charity, to relieve distress by personal exertions and sacrifices. The man, who to alleviate or remove the misery of his fellow men, exposes himself to cold, hunger and fatigue, in visiting the abodes of wretchedness, penury, and even of guilt; who, when there, listens with sympathizing attention to the story of sickness, told by its miserable inmates; relieves by personal attentions their immediate sufferings, and cheers their hearts with assurances of future assistance, exhibits the fairest specimen of human benevolence. Surely, upon the head of such a man, the blessing of many ready to perish, will fall.

The sketch, thus feebly drawn, exhibits one feature in the character of our deceased friend. To him, the sick and suffering, whether rich or poor, were equally objects of attention and compassion. He regarded all alike, the rich, the poor, the beggar and the outcast, when his services were required to relieve their distresses. This with him was a matter of feeling, rather than the result of meditation. He did not serve the poor, that he might gain the favor of the rich, but to fulfil the desires of his own benevolent heart. He acted in accordance with an opinion which I have more than once heard him express, that the great object of the intercourse of man with his fellow men, should be to do them good.



Nor was his benevolence confined in its exercise, to the sick and the poor. It led him to rejoice in, and to promote by his influence and exertions, all plans, calculated, in his view, to promote the best interests of his fellow men. The interests of literature and sound morality, received his cordial and unvaried support. In regard to objects of this kind he indulged in no narrow, local prejudices; but looked abroad with an enlarged view, to the welfare of all, both of the present and future generations.

From the preceding statement, it cannot be doubted that Dr. Smith performed with fidelity the various relations of domestic life. That benevolence which was so active and so expansive, could not but shed its brightest and warmest rays, upon those who were the nearest and dearest to his heart. Why should I speak of him as a kind, affectionate husband, or as a tender, indulgent and judicious parent, who bore good will to all mankind? Those towards whom he sustained these endearing relations, are witnesses of the manner in which he fulfilled the duties which they require. The affection and respect which they manifested towards him while living, and the mourning and tears which accompany his departure, bear testimony, that as he was abroad, so he was at home, the kind companion, instructor and friend.

The life of a man so illustrious as our deceased friend, imperfectly portrayed as it has been, is full of instruction. It teaches the young who are just



entering upon the busy scenes of life, especially you, my young friends, who are preparing to engage in the same arduous profession, the value of enterprise, industry, and benevolence. By the exercise of these, he rose from obscurity to eminence. What hinders that you, by the judicious use of the same means, should not accomplish the same end. All cannot be equally eminent, but all may render themselves highly useful and respected.

It teaches all the folly of selfishness. He sought nothing for himself, but the reputation of doing good. This he obtained, as all others may, by deserving it; and with it, received all that he desired of this world's goods, the esteem, respect, and affection of a large and enlightened community; the approbation of the wise and the good, wherever he was known; and the assurance that his memory will remain a noble inheritance to his posterity.

If his life is instructive, not less so is his death. It adds one more lesson to the millions which have preceded it, teaching us the slight tenure by which we hold our mortal existence; and the necessity of preparing for that event, which happeneth unto all. The wise, the great, the good, and the useful, are removed in rapid succession, and why are we suffered to remain? Why! but through the good pleasure of him who waiteth to be gracious.



## NOTE.

ALTHOUGH it would have been obviously improper to enter, in the body of this discourse, upon a consideration of the medical opinions and the modes of practice of Dr. Smith, a few remarks upon them, may not, in this place be unacceptable. Upon these subjects, I have no means of information at hand, previous to his removal to this city. The few remarks which are made, must therefore be considered as confined to the last thirteen years of his life.

All who have witnessed the practice of Dr. Smith, must have remarked the rapidity and decision, and, at the same time, the general accuracy, with which he formed an opinion on the cases of disease submitted to him. He appeared to strip diseases of all their adventitious attendants, and to seize, at once, upon their important and essential phenomena. This process was often so rapid, as to resemble more the effect of intuition, than the regular deduction from a train of reasoning.

With the same rapidity, he saw, as it were with a glance, the course proper to be pursued, and with equal promptness, applied the appropriate remedies. This course of practice, can by no means be held out as an example to the young and inexperienced; nor is it perhaps the best mode to be pursued by any one. It is justifiable only in those, whose habits of observation and discrimination, have been matured, by a long course of enlightened experience. Even such would escape occasional errors, by more careful deliberation.

The practice of Dr. Smith in the treatment of acute diseases was essentially the same, as that of the other respectable physicians of New England; varied somewhat perhaps, by his notions of the nature of typhus, the prevailing fever of the country. What these notions were, and what his practice founded upon them was, he has fully explained, in his treatise upon typhus fever, published a few years since. If he had any peculiarities in the treatment of other acute diseases, than pure typhus, they consisted, in discarding the use of remedies comparatively inert, and in employing those which are more powerful and effective. He often asserted that the use of medicines, which, in common language, if they do no good, will do no harm, is usually the resort of timidity or ignorance; and that the physician who knows not when and how, to apply or to withhold the more powerful articles of the *materia medica*, was unfit for his profession.

In the treatment of chronic diseases, energetic remedies, especially such as acted powerfully upon the stomach and the other organs of digestion, were more especially resorted to by him. To this course, he appears to have been led, partly by his own reflections upon the nature and causes of most chronic diseases, and partly, by the situation in which he was placed, with respect to patients of this class.

Many of them consulted him after they had employed all the ordinary means of medication. Others still consulted him from such a distance, as precluded him from watching over the tardy effects of ordinary remedies. Both these circumstances combined, led him to the administration of full doses of

the more effective medicines, with the view of producing speedy and great changes in the organs diseased.

For the duties of a practical surgeon, Dr. Smith was eminently qualified, and upon the manner in which he performed these duties, his reputation must, in a great measure, ultimately rest. To these, he brought a mind enterprising, but not rash; anxious, yet calm, in deliberation; bold, yet cautious, in operation. His first object was, to save his patients, if possible, from the necessity of an operation; and when this could be no longer avoided, to enter upon its performance, without reluctance or hesitation. In his operations, he was calm, collected and cautious.

He manifested no desire to gain the reputation of a rapid operator: a reputation, so ardently, and it is to be feared, so unfortunately sought for, by many surgeons of the present day. He who commences an important operation, with his eye upon the minute hand of a watch, starts in a race against time, in which the life of his patient is the stake, and often the forfeit. The true rule for the surgeon is, *sat, citò si sat bené*. Neither did he make any display, in the course of his operations, to gain the applause of bystanders. Hence there was no formidable array of instruments; no ostentatious preparation; so well calculated to excite the wonder of the ignorant, and to strike a dread into the mind of the patient. Every thing necessary was prepared, while all useless parade was avoided. When engaged in an operation, his whole mind was bent upon its proper performance. Every step was carefully examined, every occurrence narrowly watched; and if any thing unusual appeared, he would ask the advice of those present, in whom he had confidence. In such cases, his promptness and decision, joined to what Chesselden calls "a mind that was never ruffled nor disconcerted," were of singular utility. By the aid of these, he could look, with a steady eye, upon the varying features of the case, as they rose to his view, and adapt his measures, at once, to every emergency. By this cautious mode of proceeding, calculated to gain, not the applause of those who were present on a single occasion, but the enduring reputation of a judicious, skilful Surgeon, he performed with great success, the most important operations. That his success was great is fully attested by the facts, that of about thirty cases of Lithotomy, only three proved fatal; and that in the course of his practice, he lost no patient of hemorrhage, in consequence of an operation, either direct or secondary.

The reputation of Dr. Smith as a Surgeon, it is believed, will rest, rather upon his judgment in deciding upon the propriety of an operation, and upon his skill in performing it, than upon any great improvement in operative surgery. The improvements which he made, and they were numerous, consisted in such as facilitated operations already known, rather than in the invention of those which were new. The enumeration of these would be interesting only to surgeons, and to these they are generally known. In addition to this, to Dr. Smith is justly due, the credit of having introduced and diffused over a large part of New England, the most correct practice, of all the celebrated surgeons of the last and the present century. This, when the extensive and beneficial results are considered, is no mean praise.



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